

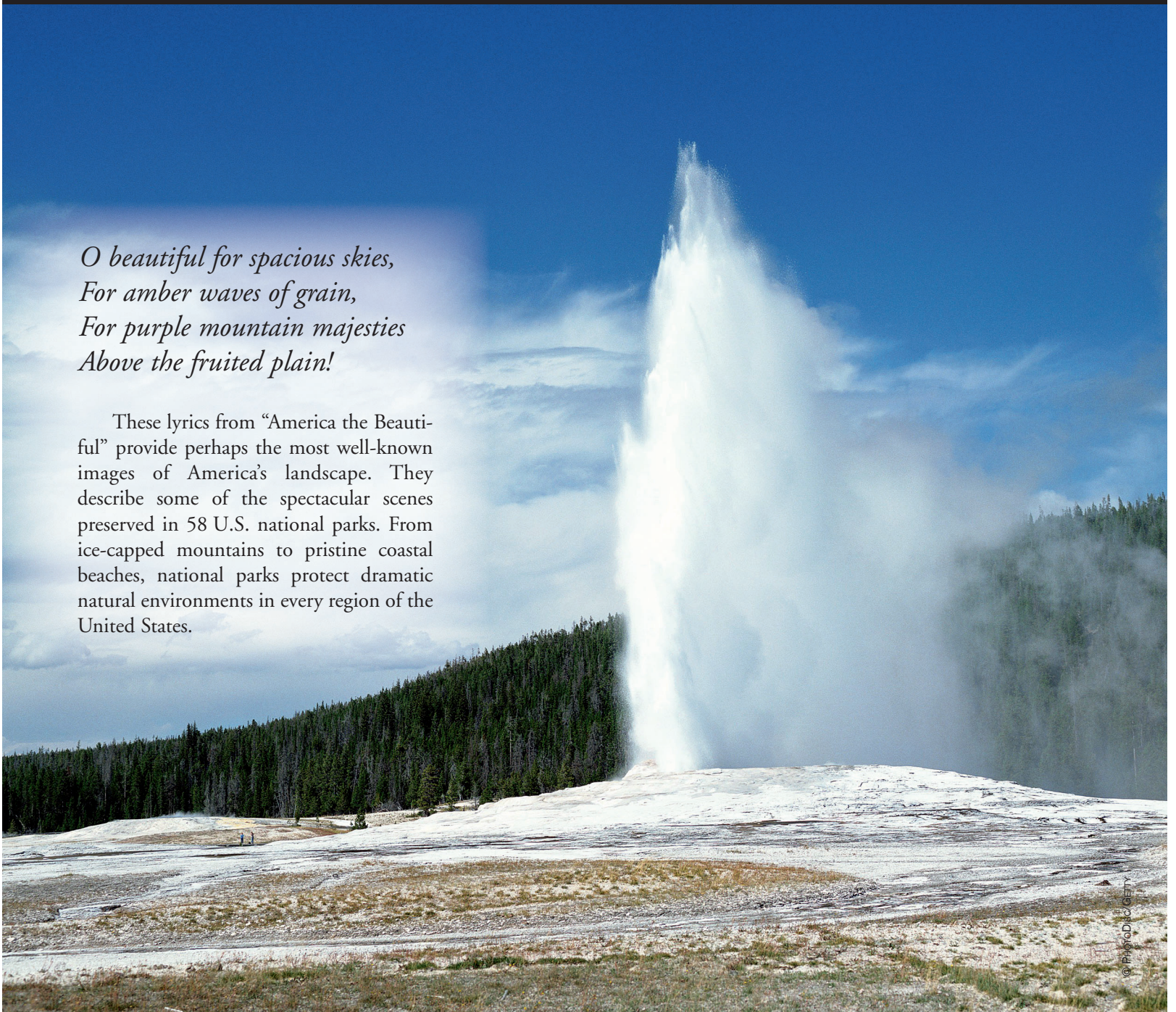
U.S. National Parks

Protecting Nature and Providing Enjoyment

BY JEANNE S. HOLDEN

*O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!*

These lyrics from “America the Beautiful” provide perhaps the most well-known images of America’s landscape. They describe some of the spectacular scenes preserved in 58 U.S. national parks. From ice-capped mountains to pristine coastal beaches, national parks protect dramatic natural environments in every region of the United States.



Old Faithful geyser in Yellowstone National Park erupts approximately every 90 minutes, spewing thousands of gallons of boiling water with each eruption.





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Mount Rainier, the dominant peak of the Cascade Range, rises above the misty landscape of Mount Rainier National Park in the western part of Washington State.

Early History of the National Parks

The first national park grew out of an idea that surfaced in the United States during the 19th century. Simply put, it was a notion that it was wise to protect wilderness areas of spectacular natural beauty. The U.S. population was increasing rapidly, numerous settlers were moving westward, and the federal government was funding expeditions to western lands. Many people were starting to realize the range of natural environments within the United States.

One of these, an artist named George Catlin, is credited with the vision of a national park. During a trip to the Dakotas in 1832, Catlin expressed concern about the effects of westward expansion on native civilizations, wildlife, and wilderness. These might be safeguarded, he wrote, “by some great protecting policy of government.... A nation’s park, containing man and beast, in all the wild and freshness of their nature’s beauty.”

It was more than 30 years before Catlin’s vision was expressed in U.S. policy. In 1864, federal lands were set aside “for public use, resort and recreation” when Presi-

dent Abraham Lincoln signed legislation donating the Yosemite Valley to the state of California. But the world’s first national park was not created until eight years later. On March 1, 1872, President Ulysses S. Grant signed the Yellowstone Park Act, which reserved the Yellowstone area in the Wyoming and Montana territories “as a public park or pleasuring-ground for the benefit ... of the people.” The U.S. Department of the Interior was given responsibility for the national park.

The creation of Yellowstone National Park was controversial, however. With more than 3,300 miles of land area, most of it at or above 7,000 feet in elevation, Yellowstone had few mineral or timber resources and would not produce much agriculture. Congress questioned the need to preserve a place with so little economic value. However, explorers, conservationists, and others lobbied to protect the area for its intrinsic beauty and unusual natural features, including geysers and hot springs.

The western railroads also supported the early national parks, seeing economic value in their potential to increase tourism. Railroad companies built hotels in and near the parks to attract passengers for their trains.

Three sites in California—Yosemite, General Grant (now Kings Canyon), and Sequoia—all attained national park status in 1890. Mt. Rainier, a stratovolcano of more than 14,000 feet, and the surrounding area in Washington State became the fifth national park on March 2, 1899. Each of these parks protected dramatic western scenery.

In the early 1900s, the parks movement gained momentum. From 1901 to 1909, President Theodore Roosevelt signed legislation establishing five new national parks. President Roosevelt also enacted the Antiquities Act of 1906. Although it does not create any new parks, this law authorizes presidents to set aside “historic and prehistoric structures and other objects of historic or scientific interest” as national monuments. Roosevelt proclaimed 18 monuments during his presidency, including El Moro, New Mexico, the site of prehistoric petroglyphs, and Arizona’s Petrified Forest and the Grand Canyon. Congress later designated many of the natural monuments as national parks.

The National Park Service

By 1916, the United States had 14 national parks and 21 national monuments under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of the Interior. However, no organiza-

tion had been created to effectively manage the parks. Civilian appointees administered most of the preserves. Interior secretaries asked the U.S. Army to send troops to Yellowstone and the California parks; the troops built park roads and buildings and enforced regulations against vandalism, hunting, grazing, and timber cutting.

Besides troubled management, the national parks had problems stemming from conflicting ideas within the conservation movement. So-called utilitarian conservationists supported regulated use of natural resources rather than strict preservation. They promoted the construction of dams in national parks to enhance water and electric power resources. But a fierce battle erupted between utilitarian conservationists and preservationists when San Francisco sought to dam the Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park. In 1913 Congress permitted the dam, which historian John Ise later termed “the worst disaster ever to come to any national park.” This battle highlighted the need for an organization to manage the parks and advocate their interests.

One advocate was Stephen T. Mather, a wealthy Chicago businessman. He complained to Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane and was invited to work for Lane in Washington, D.C. A 25-year-old conservationist named Horace M. Albright became Lane’s principal aide. By 1916, Mather, Albright, and other conservationists had successfully lobbied for a new federal agency to administer park areas.

On August 25, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson signed legislation creating the National Park Service (NPS) as a new federal bureau in the Department of the Interior. The NPS was given responsibility for protecting the 40 national parks and monuments then in existence as well as those yet to be established. The National Park Service Act authorized the new bureau to “promote and regulate the use of federal areas known as national parks, monuments and reservations...to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein...by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.” The Act did not, however, assign the administration of all federal parks and monuments to a single agency. That would take another 17 years.

Mather and Albright were named the first NPS director and assistant director. Charged with upholding the dual mission of conserving park resources while allowing the public to enjoy them, Mather and Albright stressed the economic value of parks as tourist attractions. They believed visitors had to be drawn to the parks in order for the parks to prosper.



Yosemite National Park in California is known around the world for its granite cliffs and majestic waterfalls. The park contains two wild rivers and 1,600 miles of streams.

A letter Secretary Lane sent to Mather in 1918 underscored three principles to guide NPS policy: “First, that the national parks must be maintained in absolutely unimpaired form for the use of future generations as well as those of our own time; second, that they are set apart for the use, observation, health, and pleasure of the people; and third, that the national interest must dictate all decisions affecting public or private enterprise in the parks.”

The letter specified that any commercial use of the parks should encourage public use and enjoyment and should be secondary to preservation. Automobiles would

be allowed throughout the park system, and concessionaires would be permitted to build hotels. Also, educational activities would be encouraged. Secretary Lane also provided direction for the expansion of the National Parks System when he wrote: "Seek to find scenery of supreme and distinctive quality or some natural feature so extraordinary or unique as to be of national interest and importance."

Mather and Albright promoted the national parks with speeches, press briefings, conferences, and congressional visits to the preserves. Travel to the national parks jumped from 335,299 people a year in 1915 to 2,757,415 people a year in 1929. Federal funding for the administration and maintenance of the parks in 1929 was approximately 10 times greater than in 1915.

Expansion and Reorganization

The early U.S. National Park System was largely a western parks system. There were several reasons for this. First, the West held exceptionally spectacular natural scenery. Moreover, most land in the West was federally owned and could be designated as a park or monument without purchase. The system had to expand, however, to benefit people throughout the United States and thereby gain additional congressional support.

Until the 1930s, only one national park, Acadia in Maine, existed east of the Mississippi River. Then the parks system expanded eastward. Great Smoky Mountains National Park was created in North Carolina and Tennessee in 1934, and Shenandoah National Park in Virginia in 1935.

The NPS became solidly anchored in the East in the 1930s when it entered a new field—historic preservation. Congress had earlier directed the War Department to preserve historic battlefields, forts, and memorials as national military parks and monuments. When Horace Albright became the NPS director, he successfully lobbied to establish new historical parks under NPS administration. In Virginia, George Washington's Birthplace and the Colonial National Monument, which included Yorktown Battlefield, were established in 1930. Morristown National Historic Park, site of revolutionary war encampments, was established in New Jersey three years later.

Then, on August 10, 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt transferred almost 50 properties in the eastern states to NPS authority. This transfer included the Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, and White House as well as Gettysburg National Military Park in Pennsylvania, the Spanish-built fort Castillo de San



This road through California's Redwood National Park is typical of roads built after World War II to improve public access to national parks. The coast redwood trees that flank the road can grow to heights over 300 feet.

Marcos in Florida, and the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor. It also included about a dozen predominantly natural areas in eight western states.

The reorganization of August 10, 1933, was probably the most significant event in the evolution of the National Park System. It created a single system of federal parklands, truly national in scope, preserving historical and natural wonders.

In 1933, the NPS became part of President Roosevelt's New Deal program to relieve the economic depression. The new Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) employed thousands of previously unemployed young men in conservation and rehabilitation projects under NPS supervision. By 1935 the NPS administered 118 CCC camps in national parklands and 482 in state parks. In addition to park improvements, the CCC had lasting effects on NPS organization and personnel. Regional offices established to coordinate the CCC in the state parks became a permanent structure for the National Park System.

World War II to the Present

National parks activities were severely curtailed starting in 1941 with America's entry into World War II. Regular funding for the park system plummeted from \$21 million in 1940 to \$4.6 million in 1944. Full-

time employees were cut from 3,500 to less than 2,000. Premier park hotels, such as the Ahwahnee at Yosemite National Park, were used to provide soldiers with rest and rehabilitation. Other parks hosted military training programs; for example, mountain warfare training was conducted at Mount Rainier.

The National Park System nearly stopped growing during the war, but expansion resumed thereafter. Overall, growth was strong. From the 1933 reorganization until 1951, 59 areas were added to the National Park System. Of these, 11 were predominantly natural areas, 40 were historical areas, and eight were recreational areas based on modern developments (such as roads or reservoirs) set aside primarily for intensive public use.

Travel exploded in the United States after the war, as personal incomes, leisure time, and automobile ownership increased. Visits to national parks jumped from six million in 1942 to 33 million in 1950. With few improvements since the 1930s, park facilities were overwhelmed.

In late 1951, Conrad L. Wirth, a landscape architect and planner who had led the CCC program in the state parks, became the NPS director. Wirth initiated a 10-year, billion-dollar program to upgrade facilities, staffing, and resource management throughout the National

Park System by 1966, the 50th anniversary of the NPS. The program was called Mission 66.

Mission 66 succeeded in creating 2,800 miles of new roads, 575 new campgrounds, 936 miles of trails and hundreds of new buildings in the National Park System. The mission's hallmark was the construction of more than 100 new visitor centers with interpretive exhibits, audiovisual programs, and other educational services. During Mission 66, Congress created more than 50 new parks—from Virgin Islands National Park to the Point Reyes National Seashore in California. Tourist visits to the parks grew to 72 million in 1960.

As the environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s strengthened, the NPS moved in a new direction—one defined by ecological issues. In 1962, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall was troubled by the overpopulation of elk in Grand Teton National Park and asked a scientific committee to examine wildlife management. Led by biologist A. Starker Leopold, the committee was critical of NPS policies that accommodated people at the expense of wildlife habitats. Various programs and policies—ones that, for example, permitted logging or grazing, controlled animal predators, or prevented lightning fires—had affected natural habitats in the parks. Some areas once defined by specific types



In Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming, the imposing peaks of the Teton Range rise above the Snake River and the sagebrush and forest that surround it. The park is home to abundant wildlife, including elk, moose, bears, coyotes, and bison.

of wildlife had none, while other areas were plagued by overpopulation. Areas that once held widely spread mature trees were now thickets.

In 1963 the scientists issued a report that recommended that “biotic associations within each park be maintained, or where necessary recreated” and stated that a national park “should represent a vignette of primitive America.” This report helped redefine NPS policies and led to changes in resource management such as the reinstitution of natural fire regimes and plans to reintroduce predators.

The National Park System continued to grow and became more diverse. In 1964 Congress authorized the Ozark National Scenic Riverways in Missouri, the first acquisition of a free-flowing river. Pictured Rocks and Indiana Dunes on the Great Lakes became the first national lakeshores in 1966. The National Trails System Act of 1968 gave the NPS responsibility for 2,000-miles of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail from Maine to Georgia.

In 1980, the National Park System more than doubled in size when President Jimmy Carter signed the Alaskan National Interest Lands Conservation Act, which gave the NPS responsibility for over 47 million acres of wilderness in Alaska. Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, the largest of the new acquisitions, contains more than 8.3 million acres, including a dramatic collection of glaciers and peaks above 16,000 feet.

In recent years, the enormous popularity of the national parks, combined with activities of modern life, created new stresses on the parks system. In the late 1980s, the NPS reported to Congress on problems ranging from overcrowding, overbuilding, and insufficient personnel, to air and water pollution and accelerated development on park boundaries. The NPS indicated that extensive action was necessary to counteract these problems and protect the parks system.

But the 1980s and 1990s brought NPS cutbacks for various reasons. The country was hit by an economic recession in 1981. Some political leaders argued for the NPS to restore visitor enjoyment as a primary management goal, while powerful lobbies argued for parks to be opened to commercial and industrial uses. In the 1990s, when Congress sought to reduce the size of the federal workforce, the number of NPS employees decreased. Throughout this period, the NPS curtailed expansion and focused on maintaining resources and facilities in existing parks. At the same time, the NPS became more focused on educating the public about historical and environmental issues.



This stone-covered beach and evergreen forest on the coast of Maine are part of the rugged scenery of Acadia National Park, the first national park established east of the Mississippi River.

As the 21st century began, the NPS continued to work to reduce the backlog in parks’ maintenance, to strengthen law enforcement and increase visitor safety, and to improve resource management. The NPS also intensified efforts to expand partnerships and volunteer opportunities, emphasizing cooperation with other government bodies, foundations, corporations, and private individuals to protect the parks and advance park service programs.

The NPS is consistently rated one of the most respected federal agencies in public opinion polls. National parks are regarded as perfect vacation destinations. By 2006, the national park system had more than 280 million visitors a year.

“The national park idea has been nurtured by each succeeding generation of Americans,” said former NPS director George B. Hartzog. According to Hartzog, “The National Park System represents America at its best. Each park contributes to a deeper understanding of the history of the United States and our way of life....”

A Closer Look at Some National Parks

ACADIA NATIONAL PARK was the first park to be established east of the Mississippi River. Located on the rugged coast of Maine, the park is a combination of granite cliffs, stony beaches, deep lakes, and glacier-carved mountains rising up out of the sea. The park preserves sections of Maine’s offshore islands and rocky coast, and the park’s landscape varies from dense evergreen forests to marshes to meadows.

President Woodrow Wilson created the park as Sieur de Monts National Monument on July 8, 1916 to protect the area's spectacular scenery. In 1919 it was designated a national park and renamed Lafayette National Park. Later, the park was renamed Acadia.

Acadia National Park is known for its 120 miles of trails, which range from fairly level, easy walks to the steep and challenging Precipice Trail. Approximately 50 miles of rustic carriage roads were created between 1915 and 1933 as a gift of philanthropist John D. Rockefeller Jr., a skilled horseman who wanted to travel on roads without motor-driven vehicles. He financed and directed the construction of state-of-the-art carriage roads with magnificent views. Made of broken stones, the roads were constructed largely by hand. The carriage roads in Acadia are the best examples of broken stone roads in the United States today. They are a major attraction to hikers, bicyclists, carriage riders, and cross-country skiers. Other popular activities in Acadia are kayaking and canoeing.

DENALI NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE embodies the spirit of interior Alaska—one of the last great wilderness frontiers. Among the oldest U.S. national parks, it includes the tallest mountain in North America, Mount McKinley. But the park was not established because

of this majestic mountain, which the native Athabascan people named Denali, or “the High One.” Rather, naturalist Charles Sheldon, who visited the region in 1906 and 1907, lobbied for a national park to protect Dall sheep and other wildlife. In 1917 Mount McKinley National Park was established. In 1980, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act enlarged the park by four million acres and designated it as Denali National Park and Preserve. At six million acres, the park is now larger than the state of Massachusetts.

Denali is striking in its contrasts. It is a habitat of large mammals—caribou, moose, Dall sheep, wolves, and grizzly bears—and miniature plants. The northern half of Denali is comprised of tundra-covered lowlands, hills, and flat valleys, as well as glacier-fed rivers, lakes, and streams. The tundra is a treeless area between the icecap and the tree line in Arctic regions in which there are exquisite dwarfed shrubs and miniaturized wildflowers adapted to a short growing season. Denali is home to more than 650 species of flowering plants as well as mosses, lichens, and fungi. The southern half of Denali is made up of Mount McKinley, its glaciers, rivers, and surrounding lesser peaks. Visitors to Denali enjoy sightseeing, backpacking, mountaineering, and research opportunities.



Denali, also known as Mount McKinley, is the tallest mountain in North America. It towers above Denali National Park and Preserve in Alaska.



Everglades National Park in Florida is the largest protected wilderness east of the Rocky Mountains. The park contains several distinct habitats but is most famous for its wetlands.

EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK is qualitatively different from other parks. It is the largest subtropical wilderness in the United States. Located in southern Florida, west of Miami, it is a place where earth, water, and sky meet in a low, green landscape. Home to a wealth of birds and other wildlife, this preserve is particularly notable as a refuge for many rare and endangered species, such as the American crocodile, Florida panther, and West Indian manatee.

The legislation requiring wilderness preservation in the Everglades is among the strongest in U.S. national parks' history. Passed on May 30, 1934, the legislation authorized creation of a park from land acquired through donation. It further specified that Everglades The size of the national park has been increased several times. Now it is the largest protected wilderness east of the Rocky Mountains. The park is often described as a water marsh, but it encompasses several distinct habitats. Florida Bay contains more than 800 square miles of marine bottom, largely covered by seagrass and containing fish, shellfish, coral, and sponges. The coastal channels and winding rivers hold mangrove forests. The park also includes cypress swamps, saw-grass prairies, and pinelands. Pinelands are home to more than 200 varieties of tropical plants. Approximately 25 varieties of orchids grow in the park, as well as more than 1,000 other kinds of seed-bearing plants and 120 species of trees.

Approximately 300 species of birds have been recorded in the Everglades, including the short-tailed hawk, the Caribbean flamingo, herons, egrets, and ibises.

The park's waters are inhabited by otters, manatees, alligators, and crocodiles. In fact, according to the National Park Service, the Everglades is the only place in the world where alligators and crocodiles coexist naturally. More than 36 threatened or endangered animal species live in the preserve, including the green turtle, the Key Largo Cotton mouse, the American crocodile, and the Schaus swallowtail butterfly. All of the endangered species in the Everglades are threatened by loss of habitat and alteration of water flow.

A large drop in the number of wading birds nesting in the Everglades and other changes indicate problems in the ecosystem of South Florida. Many of these problems stem from disruptions in the quality, quantity, timing and distribution of the region's water. A massive ecosystem restoration effort is underway, involving government agencies as well as civic leaders, environmental groups, and business professionals.

GLACIER NATIONAL PARK is more than one million acres of beautiful mountainous wilderness on the U.S.-Canadian border. Located in northwestern Montana, it contains two mountain ranges, 37 glaciers, over 130 named lakes, hundreds of different kinds of plants, and hundreds of species of animals, including grizzly bears and the Canadian lynx. Glacier National Park was created in 1910, becoming the tenth U.S. national park.

One of the remarkable sights within Glacier National Park is the famed Going-to-the-Sun Road, which was built in response to increasing numbers of park visitors.



This mountain is one of the many peaks carved by glaciers that exist in Glacier National Park in northwestern Montana. The park was created in 1910 as the tenth U.S. national park.

After the park was created, the Great Northern Railway built hotels and small lodges, called chalets, throughout the new preserve. Without a road through the mountains, visitors to the interior of the park took a train ride, followed by a multi-day journey on horseback. A road across the mountains was needed to accommodate visitors. Completed in 1932 after 11 years of work, the road is considered an engineering marvel and a National Historic Landmark. The road winds through the park's wild interior, crossing the Continental Divide and presenting tourists with spectacular views of the Lewis and Livingston mountain ranges, thick forests, alpine tundra, waterfalls, and two large lakes.

Across the border from Glacier National Park is Canada's Waterton National Park. In 1932, the U.S. and Canadian governments designated the parks as Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, a symbol of friendship between the two countries. It was the first such park in the world.

GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

Each year, approximately five million people visit the Grand Canyon, the glorious 277-mile-long gorge carved out of the colorful rocks of northwestern Arizona. Considered one of the world's natural wonders, the chasm measures about 15 miles at its widest point and 6,000 feet at its deepest. At its base winds the Colorado River, which carved the canyon over the past six million years.

Views of the canyon are breathtaking. Most visitors stop their cars to admire the canyon from overlooks along the South Rim. Adventurous vacationers hike or ride mules to the gorge's bottom to examine the inner canyon with its fossils and old mines. The most rugged visitors take a trip through the canyon on the Colorado River. River trips can take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks.

The park contains 1,902 miles of spectacular landscapes ranging from pine and fir forests to painted deserts, from sandstone canyons to dramatic waterfalls. "It is beyond comparison—beyond description," President Theodore Roosevelt exclaimed in 1903 upon seeing the area. Roosevelt created the Grand Canyon Game Preserve in 1906 and the Grand Canyon National Monument in 1908. However, legislation to establish a national park was not enacted until 1916.

The exposed geologic layers of the Grand Canyon provide records of geological history that are among the most complete in the world. According to the National Park Service, geologic formations, such as schist at the bottom of the canyon, date back 1,800 million years. The canyon is also considered one of the finest examples of arid-land erosion in the world.

Remarkably, the preserve contains five of the seven recognized life zones. With its wide range of elevations, it has a large variety of plant and animal life indigenous to desert and mountain environments. It is home to numerous rare and threatened/endangered plant and animal species, as well as some species that are found only at the Grand Canyon. With more than 300 species of birds, the park is particularly notable for hosting one of the most rare birds in the world, the California condor, which has a wingspan of more than nine feet!

The park's other wildlife includes many species of fish, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals. Among the mammals are bighorn sheep, bobcats, Albert squirrels, coyotes, and mountain lions. The park is also home to more than 1,500 plant species that include hundreds of flowering plants.



The Grand Canyon, carved by the Colorado River over the past six million years, is considered one of the natural wonders of the world. About five million people visit the Grand Canyon each year.

National Park Partners and Advocates

The U.S. National Park System benefits from organizations that assist the parks in many ways. Some advocate for the protection of park environments. Others raise funds for park acquisitions, maintenance, conservation programs, and education activities. With the help of these organizations, the National Park Service can successfully preserve parks' resources, provide memorable visitor experiences, and build public support and conservation awareness—all with limited resources.

National Parks Conservation Association

The oldest organization dedicated to the U.S. national parks is the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA). Its mission is “to protect and enhance America's National Park System for present and future generations.” Founded in 1919, the NPCA was established only three years after the National Park Service was created. In fact, the first National Park Service Director, Stephen Mather, was one of the NPCA founders. Mather believed that the national parks would need an independent advocate outside of the government to ensure that these preserves would remain unimpaired for generations to come. The NPCA fulfills this role.

Today, the NPCA has more than 325,000 members. It is the only independent, nonpartisan membership organization dedicated to protecting America's park system. By gathering information and developing relationships with Congress and the executive branch, the NPCA works to overcome what it calls major threats to the National Park System. The single greatest threat facing the parks, according to NPCA, is insufficient funding. Other problems include air pollution in the parks and massive developments near parks boundaries, which threaten to overwhelm the natural environment.

The NPCA operates two centers, the Center for Park Management and the Center for the State of the Parks, as well as eight regional and six field offices. The group's undertakings range from letter-writing campaigns to fundraising events and conservation awareness activities. The NPCA actively opposes policies that it believes would hurt the parks, and it sometimes pursues legal solutions in the courts when other approaches are not successful.

National Park Foundation

Chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1967, the National Park Foundation (NPF) is the official nonprofit partner of the National Park Service. The mission of the NPF is to strengthen the connection between the American people and the national parks by soliciting donations for the parks, creating innovative partnerships, and increasing public awareness. The Secretary of the Interior serves as chairman of the NPF board, and the director of the National Park Service acts as secretary to the board.

The NPF grants more than \$31 million annually in cash, services, or in-kind donations to the National Park Service and its partners for conservation, preservation, and education programs. Grants vary from small start-up funds to large, multi-year projects. In 2005 and 2006, for example, the NPF gave two million dollars in support of the National Park Service's Junior Ranger program. This program allows interested students to complete a series of activities during a park visit, share their answers with a park ranger, and receive an official Junior Ranger badge and certificate. In addition, the NPF also promotes a wide variety of volunteer experiences aimed at creating personal, lasting connections between individuals and the national parks.

Websites of Interest

U.S. National Parks and the National Park Service

<http://www.nps.gov>

The main website of the National Park Service, this site features a U.S. map that allows you to click on individual states to find the national parks there.

<http://www2.nature.nps.gov/geology>

This is the National Park Service's geology website. It provides information on management and conservation of geologic resources.

www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/shaping/index.htm

Here is an online book, *The National Parks: Shaping the System*, about the history of national parks from their beginnings through 2004. This book was produced by the Harpers Ferry Center of the National Park Service.

www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/runte1/index.htm

This is the online version of the book *National Parks: The American Experience* by Alfred Runte.

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